

**Office of the President**

Vivian M. Dickerson, MD, FACOG  
Department of Ob-Gyn  
PO Box 14091  
Orange CA 92863-1491  
Phone: 714/456-6853  
Fax: 714/456-7180  
Email: [vdickers@uci.edu](mailto:vdickers@uci.edu)

February 25, 2005

Dear Representatives DeGette and Castle:

On behalf of the American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists (ACOG), representing more than 46,000 physicians dedicated to improving women's health, we support your legislation HR 810, the Stem Cell Research Enhancement Act. HR 810 would expand the current federal stem cell research policy, while ensuring no federal funding is used to derive stem cells or destroy embryos. We also appreciate that it would direct the National Institutes of Health to develop appropriate ethical guidelines for future derivation of human stem cell lines.

The current policy seriously jeopardizes research that has the potential to effectively treat conditions from which many women suffer, including ovarian and breast cancer, osteoporosis, heart disease, and arthritis. Scientists and researchers have made amazing strides in the area of stem cell research, but the current federal stem cell policy restricts them from recognizing the potential of this field. The majority of stem cell lines made available to researchers under federal policy (those created before August 9, 2001) are contaminated by mouse feeder cells and generally unusable. The policy not only leaves few lines available to scientists, but it also deters researchers from continuing to expand investigation in this arena--forcing many of them to go overseas.

We are just beginning to understand the impact of this life-saving medical technology. Research in therapeutic cloning and stem cell technology may uncover treatments to disease that will benefit patients immeasurably. Many scientists believe this technology will be the key to developing stem cell therapies specifically tailored to an individual's medical condition without triggering an immune rejection response. Now more than ever, this potential must be explored.

ACOG supports innovations in medical treatments that will save lives and alleviate suffering, and we commend you for your leadership on this issue. If you have any questions, please contact Krysta Jones, Government Relations staff, at 202-314-2322.

Sincerely,

Vivian M. Dickerson, MD  
President